

TOP SECRET ZARF UMBRA

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NOFORN

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
June 18, 1976

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

LEBANON EVACUATION SITUATION REPORT No. 2
(As of 2200 EDT)

The US-UK convoy is scheduled to leave Beirut between 0130 and 0200 EDT on June 19.

Results of British Convoy

The two US officials who accompanied the British convoy that reached Damascus earlier today have been debriefed. The convoy's route is shown on the attached map. According to the officials, during the trip the convoy was escorted by at least four different identifiable groups at different times: a mixed Palestinian force, Libyans, pro-Syrian Saiga elements, and Syrian soldiers. The convoy was unescorted between Rum and Mashgharah. From the point a few miles after the convoy turned inland to the Syrian border, the route appeared under the control of the Syrian army or allied Saiga units, although the convoy came under fire at one point near Jazzin.

25X1D [REDACTED] a 40-minute skirmish between Lebanese terrorists and Syrian troops took place near Jazzin about noon today. The fighting may have occurred at about the time the British convoy was passing through the area, and would explain reports that the convoy was fired upon.

The Military Situation

25X1D The military situation remains basically unchanged from the last situation report. According to press reports, Christian forces have laid siege to the Palestinian refugee camp at Tall Zatar, in Beirut's eastern suburbs. Tall Zatar is well removed from Ras Beirut where most Americans live, but the

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leftists and Palestinians have often responded in the past to attacks on the camp by counterattacking in the port and commercial districts.

Elsewhere, Syrian forces continue to slowly consolidate their hold on areas around urban centers, such as Sidon and Tripoli, where they have encountered stiff resistance. In central Lebanon, scattered exchanges of artillery and mortar fire continued between Christian, Palestinian, and Syrian forces.

Syrian Aircraft Deployment

25X1D

[REDACTED] Syria shifted an unknown number of MIG-21 fighter aircraft yesterday from Palmyra in central Syria to Al Qusayr on the northeastern Lebanon border. These aircraft may be replacements for a number of fighters that were moved earlier this week from Al Qusayr to an airfield in northern Syria closer to the Iraqi border. We have had no indications yet that any of the aircraft recently deployed to Al Qusayr have been used in operational roles in Lebanon. 25X1D

[REDACTED]

Soviet Naval Activity in the Mediterranean

The Soviets are expanding their surveillance of US naval units in the eastern Mediterranean. Three Soviet combatants--including the helicopter carrier Leningrad--are making rapid transits from the anchorage off Malta to the

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vicinity of the two US naval task groups near Lebanon. One of the ships has already joined the Soviet ships that are trailing the USS America group southwest of Cyprus. The two others are now south of Crete and are still moving eastward. Two Soviet patrol boats, possibly accompanied by a destroyer also have departed their anchorage east of Crete and are moving toward Lebanon. These redeployments will bring the number of Soviet surface ships watching the US groups to ten. A Soviet submarine also is in the area.

The Soviets are concerned about the movements of US ships, and most likely are unsure about US plans. We do not think it is likely that the Soviets would harass or interfere with the US task groups.

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